

### Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (currently amended) A digital processor, ~~Valued content in a digital form~~ comprising:

a processor readable medium having a valued content in a digital form,  
organized to contain:

a preexisting digital file having independent value to a provider; and  
a digital string provided by a purchaser to a provider system of said  
preexisting digital file ~~the valued content~~, said digital string having a latent value  
at least to said purchaser, and embedded in said preexisting digital file by said  
provider system, to form an embedded digital file, before the valued content is  
conveyed to said purchaser.

2. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with  
claim 1, wherein said ~~embedded~~ digital string further comprises ~~an embedded~~ said  
digital string encrypted by said provider system, to form an encrypted digital string, said  
encrypted digital string embedded in said preexisting digital file.

3. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with  
claim 2, wherein said encrypted digital string further comprises a private digital string  
encrypted using a public key of a private/public encryption key pair and a public digital  
string encrypted using a private key of said private/public key encryption key pair.

4. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with  
claim 1, wherein the valued content further comprises said digital string embedded in  
said preexisting digital file in a human perceptible form.

5. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises a digital watermark generated by said provider system from said digital string.

6. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises a digitized image.

7. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises text.

8. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises video images.

9. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises digitized audio.

10. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said latent value further comprises information which places said purchaser at increased financial risk when known by another.

11. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, wherein said preexisting digital file further comprises a provider digital string.

12. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 11, wherein said provider digital string further comprises [[a]] said provider digital string encrypted by said provider system.

13. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a portable ~~media~~ medium including said embedded digital file recorded on said portable media.

14. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content~~ in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a portable ~~media~~ medium having said embedded digital file recorded thereon.

15. (currently amended) A digital processor ~~Valued content in a digital form~~ comprising:

a processor readable medium having a valued content in a digital form,  
organized to contain:

a preexisting digital file having independent value to a provider; and  
a digital string provided by a purchaser to a provider system of said  
preexisting digital file ~~the valued content~~, said digital string encrypted by said  
provider system~~[[,]]~~ and combined with an encrypted provider digital string to  
form a combined encrypted digital string,[[and]] said combined encrypted digital  
string embedded in said preexisting digital file by said provider system before  
the valued content is conveyed to said purchaser, said digital string having a  
latent value at least to said purchaser which places said purchaser at increased  
financial risk when known by another.

16. - 20. (cancelled)

21. (currently amended) A method for protecting valued content comprising the steps of:

electronically acquiring a digital string from a purchaser to form an acquired  
digital string, said acquired digital string having a latent value at least to said purchaser;  
embedding said acquired digital string in a preexisting digital file to form an  
embedded digital file, said preexisting digital file having independent value to a  
provider; and

conveying said embedded digital string ~~and said digital~~ file, as valued content, to  
said purchaser.

22. (currently amended) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21,  
further comprising the step of encrypting said acquired digital string.

23. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 22, wherein said encrypting step further comprises the step of encrypting said digital string with a public encryption key of a private/public encryption key pair forming a private digital string.

24. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 22, wherein said encrypting step further comprises the step of encrypting said digital string with a private encryption key of a private/public encryption key pair forming a public digital string.

25. (currently amended) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, further comprising the step of generating a digital watermark from said acquired digital string.

26. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said embedding step further comprises the step of embedding a provider digital string in said digital file.

27. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 26, further comprising the step of encrypting said provider digital string.

28. (currently amended) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, further comprising the step of recording said embedded digital file on a portable ~~media~~ medium.

29. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said conveying step further comprises the step of transmitting said valued content to said purchaser via a network.

30. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said conveying step further comprises the step of transmitting said valued content to said purchaser via a wireless communication network.

31. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said embedding step further comprises embedding said acquired digital string in a digitized image.

32. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said embedding step further comprises embedding said acquired digital string in digitized audio.

33. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said embedding step further comprises embedding said acquired digital string in a video image.

34. (original) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, wherein said acquiring step further comprises acquiring information from said purchaser that places said purchaser at increased financial risk when known by another.

35. (currently amended) A method in accordance with the method of claim 21, further comprising the step of a provider system negotiating with ~~said~~ a purchaser system to determine a content for said digital string.

36. (currently amended) A method for protecting valued content comprising the steps of:

electronically acquiring a digital string from a purchaser, said digital string having a latent value at least to said purchaser;

embedding said acquired digital string in an encryption key to form an embedded encryption key;

embedding said acquired digital string in a preexisting digital file having independent value to a content owner to form an embedded digital file;

encrypting said embedded digital file to form an encrypted digital file; and conveying said embedded encryption key and [[an]]said encrypted digital file, as valued content, to said purchaser.

37. (currently amended) A system for generating valued content in a digital form comprising:

a processor;

a storage device coupled to said processor;

an interface coupled to said processor and to a purchaser system; and

a valued content in a digital form comprising:

a preexisting digital file having independent value to a content owner,

and

a digital string provided by a purchaser to said processor, said digital string having a latent value at least to said purchaser, and embedded in said preexisting digital file by said processor ~~forming to form~~ a second digital file to be conveyed to said purchaser system as valued content ~~system~~ using said interface.

38. (original) The system of claim 37, further comprising an output device coupled to said processor to provide human perception of said content.

39. (currently amended) The system of claim 37, further comprising[[:]]

~~an interface coupled to said processor; and~~

a network connection coupled to said interface and to ~~[[a]]~~said purchaser system.

40. (original) The system of claim 39, further comprising a wireless network coupled to said interface and said purchaser system.

41. (original) The system of claim 37, wherein said processor is adapted to negotiate with said purchaser system to determine a content of said digital string.

42. (original) The system of claim 37, further comprising a point of sale machine coupled to said processor.

43. (currently amended) The system of claim 42, further comprising:

~~an interface coupled to said processor;~~

a sale interface coupled to said point of sale machine; and

a network connection coupled to said interface and to said sale interface.

44. (currently amended) A system for generating valued content in a digital form comprising:

a purchaser processor adapted to communicate to ~~said~~ a provider system an interest in purchasing a preexisting digital file from a content owner, said preexisting digital file having independent value to said content owner;

an interface coupled to said purchaser processor and ~~[[a]]~~ said provider system, said provider system adapted to request a purchaser digital string from said purchaser processor, said purchaser digital string having a latent value at least to said purchaser; ~~[[and]]~~

a storage device coupled to said purchaser processor and adapted to send said purchaser digital string to said provider processor using said interface; and

and said provider processor embedding said purchaser digital string into said preexisting digital file.

45. (original) The system of claim 44, further comprising a wireless network coupled to said interface and said provider system.

46. (original) The system of claim 44, further comprising a network coupled to said interface and said provider system.